

## The Layers (Stanley Kunitz)

I have walked through many lives,  
and I am not who I was,  
from which I struggle

When I look behind,  
before I can gather strength  
I see the milestones dwindling  
and the slow fires trailing  
over which scavenger angels

Oh, I have made myself a tribe out of my  
How shall the heart be reconciled  
In a rising wind  
those who fell along the way,

Yet I turn, | I turn,  
with my will intact to go  
and every stone on the road

In my darkest night,  
and I roamed through wreckage,  
"Live in the layers, not on the litter." |

Though I lack the art to decipher it,  
In my book of transformations  
I am not done with my changes.

some of them my own,  
though some principle of being abides  
not to stray.

as I am compelled to look  
to proceed on my journey,  
toward the horizon  
from the abandoned camp-sites,  
wheel on heavy wings.

true affections, and my tribe is scattered!  
to its feast of losses?  
the manic dust of my friends,  
bitterly stings my face.

exulting somewhat,  
wherever I need to go,  
precious to me.

when the moon was covered  
a nimbus-clouded voice directed me:

no doubt the next chapter  
is already written: